

The Arm of the Lord - Part 8

by T. Austin-Sparks

Jesus Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and end of all things, comprehending all speech and all needs, and he is the source of life and understanding, giving us wisdom, power, and purpose.

Duration: 39:11

Scripture: Matthew 28:18, John 14:6, Colossians 2:9, Hebrews 1:1-2, Revelation 1:8, Revelation 21:6, Revelation 22:13

Topics: "God's Work"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes that Jesus provides a pattern and design for life, giving it meaning and explanation. He states that many people struggle to make sense of life and find it confusing and chaotic. However, when they come to Jesus, their lives become ordered and they begin to understand their purpose. The speaker also highlights that Jesus speaks to us through the life He gives us, which is a powerful communicator and solves our problems.

Transcript

This afternoon we were considering some of the Resurrection titles of our Lord. I'm going to carry that a little further this evening, and ask you to turn to the book of the Revelation again, in the first chapter, noting that the Lord Jesus here presents himself as the Living One who was dead and is alive again, is alive forevermore. In verse 8, I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty.

In chapter 21, verse 6, and he said unto me, there comes a past, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. Chapter 22, verse 13, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. This then is a title of the Lord in Resurrection.

He takes to himself the Omega, the Alpha and the Omega. I expect the youngest person here knows those two letters are the first and the last of the Greek alphabet. The one is much like the first letter in our own alphabet.

There it is. The other is not a bit like the last letter in our alphabet. There it is.

Alpha and Omega, first and the last. In every language there is something that corresponds to an A and a Z, an Alpha, Omega, a beginning and an end. It does not matter how vast the language may be.

It was told in China recently that there are at least 11,000 characters in the Chinese language. There are more than that in the Greek language. But it does not matter whether we have only a poor 26,000 English or an 11,000 or more in some other language.

Everything is bounded by the A, the Z, the Alpha, the Omega. You can't get anything outside of that. All is within that.

Jesus says, I am the Alpha and the Omega. The Alpha and the Omega comprehend all speech. There is no speech possible in any language outside of what comes between those two letters.

All that can be said has to come within their compass. Nothing can be said outside of their compass. Jesus says that of himself.

The Word of God tells us that God has summed up all things in Christ. That he is the fullness of God. And what is more, it shows us that God will never speak to anybody outside of his Son, Jesus Christ.

He has bounded all his speech to man by his Son. He has made Christ the compass of all. He has nothing to say and he will say nothing outside of his Son.

No man cometh to the Father but by me, said the Son. And no one knowing the Father or the Son except the Father, show him. The apostle who wrote the letter to the Hebrews began by saying, in old times, God spake in fragments, in parts and in various manners by different men of different times.

But at last he summed up all things in his Son. At the end, he has spoken unto us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things. All that God will say and all that God can say to us will be in Jesus Christ.

I am the author. The very first syllable, the very first syllable of the knowledge of God is the knowledge of Jesus Christ. It begins with A. It's the first list of a veil.

He has given unto us the Spirit whereby we cry Abba. Father. The first syllable of the Christian life begins with A. Father.

We don't know Father until we know Jesus Christ. He it is that has revealed the Father. The beginning of all knowledge of God as Father comes to us through Jesus Christ.

Yes, he was right when he said in his prayer, I have given unto them thy name. I have given unto them thy name. And it was the name Father.

Do you want to know God? Do you want to know him as Father? Do you want to know anything that he has to say to you to make known to you? Do you want to know all or any of the vast wealth God would reveal to you? You can only know it in Jesus Christ. You can only know it in him who is the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega. There is no knowledge without words made up of letters.

And all the letters are between these two. There is no knowledge that is knowledge indeed. The knowledge which is life eternal except in Jesus Christ.

This, this is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God and him whom thou didst send, Jesus Christ. No knowledge outside of Christ. And there is no communication from God outside of Jesus Christ.

Set Jesus Christ aside and God is silent. There is nothing to say to you. You fail to give his Son his flesh.

God is just dumb. You will never hear anything. He will communicate nothing.

The more, the more you honour the Son, the more the Father will come out to you and communicate with you. Secondly, Alpha and Omega not only comprehends all speech, it comprehends all needs. All needs.

You don't want anything outside of A and Z. Outside of Alpha and Omega. You don't want to create any new letters at all. It's all there.

It's all there. It doesn't matter what big words you use. There are some big words.

Men seem to be making very big words in these days. Plenty of new big words. Some of you get a bit upset at big words when they use.

It doesn't matter how big the word or how long the sentence is. How great may be the utterance is. You can meet the need of the biggest word, the longest sentence and the fullest utterance between Alpha and Omega.

For all these new big words, you haven't got to create new letters. They're all meant here. We are told by the Apostle Paul that in him, that is in Christ, all the fullness dwells.

In him all the fullness dwells of wisdom and of knowledge. It was the good pleasure of the Father that in him should all the fullness dwell. We are very fond of that word, that word opposed to the Philipians.

My God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Every need corresponding to, and can we fathom this? Can we compass this? His riches in glory. But every need according to that met in Christ Jesus.

It's all we need. All we need. Alpha and Omega.

I said we may make great demands upon the alphabet in trying to express new ideas, fresh inventions and discoveries. But no matter what the demands may be of the growing language, the growing dictionary, you never get the biggest dictionary in any language that goes outside of A instead Alpha and Omega. That Chinese language which is indeed a Chinese puzzle to us with all its numerous characters.

How comprehensive, capable of expressing ideas far, far better than most languages, certainly better than our language. Capable of compassing a range of thoughts and expressions far beyond us. Yet it's all between a beginning and an end.

You see what I mean when Jesus says I am Alpha and Omega? He's saying I'm all you need. All you need. You never can have a need, never can invent anything for which I am not sufficient.

No situation can arise that exhausts me in him all the fullness. Well, I am Alpha and Omega. Christ is the first and the last in creation, so says the Word.

That letter to the Colossians to which we've just referred at the beginning, the Apostle tells us so clearly and precisely that in him were all things created. And that he was before all things. The Apostle John tells us at the beginning of his gospel the same thing, that in him were all things created.

He's the beginning in creation. In the letter to the Hebrews already referred to right at the beginning, we are told that the ages were created through him. They came into being through him.

He is described in this book of the Revelation, chapter 3 and verse 14. These things that we are in, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God is the Alpha and the Omega in creation. Here he is the Alpha, the very agent and instrument of creation.

He was creation's design. For all things were made to be a temporal and material expression of spiritual and moral realities in the Son of God. If we had eyes and understanding to see the deeper secrets of an unfallen creation, a vast universe from the hand of God, we should see in everything something that speaks of the Son of God, his spiritual, his moral character and his place in the system of God.

He is the pattern of creation. It is of him and for him, through him and unto him, says the word, is the Alpha and the Omega. He is declared to be the completion, the finish of the creation of God.

But that may not be very helpful to us. It is by way of putting the Lord Jesus into his place. But what comes nearer to us is this, that he is the Alpha and the Omega in redemption.

He is the first and the last in redemption. Look again at that letter to the Hebrews. We have this familiar words which perhaps you don't need to turn to in chapter 12 and in verse 2. Looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega of redemption.

In the sense, Christ is the beginning of redemption. In this simple sense, there is no redemption until we come to him. Just as there is no speech, no communication, no knowledge until we come to the Alphabet, so there is no redemption until we come to the Lord Jesus.

There is just nothing before A. There is nothing before Alpha. There is just where everything does begin. What is true in language is true in redemption.

There just is no redemption. There is just no salvation until we come to the Lord Jesus. But when we come to him, there is a new beginning.

That is the beginning of everything. The beginning of a whole new compass of possibility and range of communication and knowledge and understanding and wisdom and pleasure. I don't know whether you like words, whether you like handling words.

A fascinating thing with me, I just revel in words, probably some of you know, to your affliction. Words are a fascinating thing. The more you know the history of words, the source of words, the meaning of words, the more and more deeply you can find yourself engrossed with it.

Here, what a wealth there is, what a wealth there is in Christ as the Redeemer. When you take him as the beginning of salvation, what a world opens up. When you take him as the Alpha, what a marvellous world opens up.

Pick up your dictionary. Pick up Webster Unabridged. It begins with A. Oh, what a world.

What a world. On and on and on, through the many thousands of words in all their different shapes and forms, what a world there is there. I can't understand any person who can't revel in a dictionary.

Yes, but you see what I'm getting at. In this very simple way tonight, I'm saying to you that when you come to Jesus as the Alpha, a new and vast and wonderful world begins to open up. A world that you never thought of.

You never knew that word was in the dictionary. And it opens up something altogether new to you. It's like that with the Lord Jesus.

The inexhaustible world that opens up when you come to the beginnings with him. When he becomes your beginning, just like that, wealth, riches of knowledge, fullness, possibility, all there, just when you begin with A. There's no end to it really. No end.

Something more being added every year to the dictionary. It's like that in the Christian life. Oh, I'm not exaggerating, dear friend.

I really am not. I have no reason for exaggeration. Why should I stand up here and say a lot of things that are only words and they're not true? Not at all.

At any rate, my experience, my experience, through all the years and in recent weeks in the most wonderful way is that Christ is inexhaustible. He's just inexhaustible. There's more and more and more coming all the time that we did not know before.

But it all began when we began with him. It had a beginning. And it's gone on and it's going on.

And it's going on for eternity because the word says, I am his kingdom. There is no end. No end.

What a kingdom of fullness his is. But you see, you have to begin with him. You have to make him your beginning before you can have any of it.

He's got to be your altar. But then he is your altar. Yes, I say again, a new world opens up.

A new fullness begins to disclose itself. And such a fullness, such a fullness. It's all in him as our redeemer.

You see, this is what we have here in this first chapter of the book of the Revelation. The titles of the Lord are connected with him in resurrection. In resurrection.

And here we have words about what he's done in redemption. He's redeemed us unto God by his blood. He has loosed us from our sins by his blood.

He has made us a kingdom and priests unto his God by his blood. It's the work of redemption that has opened up everything new. Wonderful fullness.

He is the altar of redemption. Christ is not only the beginning, he is the beginner, says here the author. Looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter.

He is the beginner. The one who takes this matter in hand of beginning all over again and bringing us into a world that we've never known before. He is the beginner of it.

In his hands he does it. He has taken the initiative, that's the point. He has taken the initiative in our redemption.

So glad of that. So infinitely glad of that. All that may be said about our quest, man's quest for God, man's search for God, that's nothing compared with God's search for man.

What Jesus has come to reveal to us and has revealed is that God is the seeker. God is the seeker. Those wonderful and familiar parables and stories of lost sheep and lost pieces of silver and lost guns and lost people.

Yes. They're all meant to show us that God is the seeker, that the initiative is with God. The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost.

Yes. He began this thing. He began this thing.

You and I would not be here tonight if he had not begun it. He said, ye did not choose me, but I chose you. I chose you.

And that's why we are here. If we are here as those who belong to the Lord, it is simply because he sought us. Whether we were seeking or not, he was the seeker.

He began. He was the beginner. No one else can begin to redeem us.

No one else can save. There is none other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved. Only his name.

There's no beginning of redemption without him. Christ is the last. The end.

The Omega. In the sense that when he begins something, he finishes it. He says the word will perfect that which concerneth us.

He who has begun a good work in you will perfect it unto the day of Jesus Christ. He finishes what he begins. And he himself, not only being the beginning and the ending, but the beginner and himself the finish.

God is working all things unto the end that we should be conformed to the image of his Son. Christ stands, so to speak, right at the end there. And God is moving and working in us, his people, in relation to that one that stands at the end that we should be conformed to his image.

And the servant of God cries, I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness. It's that likeness which is the end. The end.

Jesus is the end. All things under heaven's government are working unto conformity to God's Son. One more thing.

Christ as Alpha and Omega makes sense. I might have a tray with all the letters of any alphabet jumbled up in it. If I know what the letters are and I know what I want, I can put them in an order that they make sense.

They express exactly what I want to express. They satisfy just exactly what I want to know. They make sense when they are put in their right place.

All that comes between Alpha and Omega. Forgive me for being so simple and elementary, but you know, a lot of people can't make sense of life at all. And that's the trouble with a great many people today.

They just cannot make sense of life. The struggle of many is to try and make sense of life. What does it all mean? What is the explanation of it all? It's all a jumble.

It's all a confusion. It's all an enigma. What does it mean? The world is in confusion.

Jesus makes sense of life. He puts the jumble into an order that is a description of a divine design, a great purpose of God, an explanation of everything. Yes, in Him we have the answer to our life problems.

In Him we have the setting in order of a life disrupted and confused. Oh, is that not true? Has that not been true of so many men and women whose lives were just mixed up and distorted and twisted and confused? Without any seeming meaning or explanation at all, any design or pattern, they couldn't make sense of anything. And they came to the Lord Jesus.

And then life made sense. Then they began to realize what it all meant, what they were for. A design, a pattern came in.

That's what most of us can say here tonight. In the Lord Jesus we found a pattern for life. We found a design for life.

We have found a meaning in life. We have found an explanation of life. Yes, Arthur and Omega, all we want to make sense.

And He does make sense. He can bring understanding. He can bring a clear pattern into life.

Let me repeat simply, there is no beginning until you have your letters, your basic character. There's no beginning and there will be no sensible end at all. Jesus justifies that need, a beginning and a sensible end.

It leads somewhere. When you and I have last reached the end, the end in glory, it will be a sensible end, won't it? It will be an end that justifies everything, that gives meaning to everything, that explains everything. Why, why, the thousand why's of lifetime will all be answered, all be explained.

Why this experience and that? Why this sorrow and that? Why this disappointment and that loss? Why this strange way in our lives? Why? It will all be answered at the end and Jesus will be the end. Yes, it will be a sensible end. We'll have nothing to quarrel with then and we shall not have any quarrel with God then because Jesus has put it all straight and brought us to an end beyond our expectations and certainly beyond our merit.

So we understand why in the Bible Jesus is called the Word of God, the Word of God, God's peace in him, by him, always and only, finally in his Son. But how does he speak? How does he speak? You say that's all very interesting, but how does he speak? After all, are we to hear with our ears? No, you come back to the context of these titles and you find it is resurrection like. I am he that liveth, I became dead, but behold, I am alive forevermore.

How does he speak? How do we know him? But how does he speak? How does he speak? You say that's all very interesting, but how does he speak? After all, are we to hear with our ears? No, you come back to the context of these titles and you find it is resurrection like. I am he that liveth, I became dead, but behold, I am alive forevermore. How does he speak? How do we know him? How is life delivered from its tangle and confusion and brought into pattern and meaning? Because he becomes our life.

Because he makes us our takers of his own written life. Because he puts that life into us which is an ordered life, which is a life of wisdom and understanding, which is a life not of confusion, but with a

pattern. It's a life power in us.

Oh, you say, how do you know? Well, I just know in this way that his life is within and that life within is answering the question, is explaining things, is giving meaning to life. He speaks by life. He speaks by life.

He speaks by giving us life. While to natural ears life may be inaudible, life is a very, very powerful speaker, you know. It is louder than words, much louder than words.

Some poor, suffering child of God may not be able to put it into words, but you've only to be with them for a very little time and by word it speaks to you. The very life that is in them speaks far, far more strongly than words. It is the life of Christ in us that is the communication, is the explanation, is the wisdom of God, the power of that life working in us.

By that God speaks to us, answers our problems. So often you see the answer of God to us is not in something that he says, but in something that he does, and what he does in a new touch of life. And strangely if we get that new touch of life in our inner man, we cease to worry about the problem.

The problem is solved. We may not have got the answer to our questions, but we've got the answer. It's in life.

We're satisfied. It doesn't matter about the problem now. It's answered in this new touch of life.

Life is God's way of speaking to us, and life is God's way of speaking through us. Many people may come into a meeting like this, and they may not understand what on earth you're talking about. They might go away and say, well I didn't understand a word, but, but there was something there.

They may not be able to describe it because they're not familiar with the alpha and the omega, the language and the letters and the phrases, but they say something. There's something there that you feel. You meet something that answers to something you want.

Well if only they knew the letters they would say, it's life. There's life. There's life.

And that is the way that God really speaks, you know. I would sooner have it that way, wouldn't you? And the people should be able to understand a lot of words and phrases and not feel the impact and registration of power of life. No, better the other way around.

Better if both. Better this way if we've got to choose between it, but they go away saying, well there's something there that you can't get away from. I can only say it's God.

And what they mean is, it's Jesus Christ the living one. That's how God speaks through us. Oh may we be in this sense, the voice of God, the speech of God, the expression of Christ, who is the alpha and the omega.

Shall we pray?

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